



# I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

A SALUTE TO THE MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS



THE PHILLY  
**POPS**  
SALUTE SERIES

CHRISTMAS



2020-21 SEASON

ENCORE!

SPECIAL EDITION



# CONTENTS

---

3	About The Salute Series	13	Guest Artist Terell Stafford
4	Letter from the President	14	The Philly POPS Festival Chorus
5	Program	16	The Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale
6	Special Messages	18	St. Thomas Gospel Choir
8	Music Director David Charles Abell	20	Board of Directors & Administrative Staff
10	Guest Vocalist Mandy Gonzalez		
11	The Philly POPS Roster		
12	Guest Artist Charlie Albright		



## ENCORE!

### PUBLISHER

*Encore!* is published by:

Encore Series, Inc.

The Philly POPS

1518 Walnut Street, Suite 1706

Philadelphia, PA 19102

**P** 215.875.8004

**E** [info@phillypops.org](mailto:info@phillypops.org)



THE PHILLY  
**POPS**  
SALUTE SERIES



## CELEBRATING AMERICA'S TRADITIONS AND COMMITMENT TO SERVICE.

At the POPS, we are committed to honoring our country's longstanding commitment to traditions, values, and service through the universal language of music.

Each Christmas season, the POPS provides 2,000 free tickets to members of the military and Philadelphia's Police and Fire Departments to the *I'll Be Home for Christmas* concert as a thank you for their commitment.



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends, Partners, and Distinguished Guests,

It's my pleasure to welcome you to our Seventh Annual *I'll Be Home for Christmas: A Salute to the Military and First Responders*.

This past year has been unlike any other. But because of the commitments of our police, fire, first responder, military, and veteran communities, along with frontline healthcare workers, our city and our nation are safer and more secure. Christmas Salute is dedicated to you and your family—tonight we honor your sacrifices and send our warmest holiday wishes.

Each year, we're able to present free Salute Series performances for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day and Christmas. This year, we were fortunate to present a streamed performance of POPS on Independence, and of course, the presentation of this evening's Christmas Salute. Our Salute Series is at the heart of who we are, and it helps us bring music to all of Philadelphia.

Beyond the Philadelphia area, tonight's virtual performance has also been sent to the American Forces Network for distribution to troops overseas, as well as to US Navy and Coast Guard ships at sea. We're proud to welcome more of our service community than ever to join in our holiday tradition.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you back in the concert hall soon.

With gratitude,

**Frank Giordano**, *President and CEO*  
Encore Series, Inc., The Philly POPS



# *I'll Be Home For Christmas: A Salute to the Military and First Responders*

# PROGRAM

---

## INTRODUCTION

**Frank Giordano,**

President & CEO, The Philly POPS

**Brigadier General (Ret'd) Carol Eggert,**

Senior Vice President, Military Affairs at Comcast

---

## PROGRAM

---

**“Color Guard and National Anthem”**

*John Stafford Smith*

**“Carol of the Bells”**

*Mykola Leontovych*

**“Into the Unknown”**

*Kristen Anderson-Lopez, Robert Lopez*

**“We Need A Little Christmas”**

*Jerry Herman*

**“Silver Bells”**

*Jay Livingston*

**“I'll Be Home for Christmas”**

*Walter Kent, Kim Gannon*

**“Ocho Kandelikas”**

*Flory Jagoda*

**“Amazing Grace”**

*Traditional*

**“Hark the Herald (Christ Is Born)”**

*Traditional*

**“(Everybody's Waitin' for) The Man with the Bag”**

*Harold Stanley, Irving Taylor, Dudley Brooks*

**“The Night Before Christmas”**

*Randol Alan Bass, Clement Clarke Moore*

**“The Story Goes On “**

*David Shire, Richard Maltby, Jr.*

**“Hallelujah Chorus”**

*George Frideric Handel*

**David Charles Abell**

*music director*

## FEATURING

---

**Mandy Gonzalez**

*guest vocalist*

**Charlie Albright**

*piano*

**Terrell Stafford**

*trumpet*

**The Philly POPS**

**Festival Chorus**

**The African Episcopal Church**

**of St. Thomas Gospel Choir**

**Philadelphia Boys**

**Choir & Chorale**

**A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR TOM WOLF**

---



**A MESSAGE FROM PHILADELPHIA MAYOR JIM KENNY**

---



**MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER THIEL OF  
PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPT**

---



**MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER OUTLAW OF  
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPT**

---







music director

# DAVID CHARLES ABELL

---

Born in North Carolina, Principal Guest Conductor David Charles Abell grew up in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia, attending Germantown Friends School through the sixth grade. A gifted musician from a young age, his study of trumpet, viola, piano, and composition eventually led to a concentration on conducting. He attended Yale University, the Juilliard School, and the Conservatoire Américain in France, where he studied under Nadia Boulanger.

At age 13, David met Leonard Bernstein while singing in the world premiere of Bernstein's *Mass* in Washington, D.C. Ten years later, David assisted his teacher John Mauceri in the tenth anniversary production of *Mass*, leading to a close association with Bernstein — as both a conducting student and as an editor of Bernstein's music.

David made his debut with The Philly POPS in 2013's *Christmas Spectacular*, returning again in 2014 and 2015. He has since conducted *Blockbuster Broadway* in 2017, *Lenny's Revolution* in 2018, *Cole Porter's Broadway* in 2019, and will lead 2020's *Sondheim: A 90th Birthday Celebration*.

In addition to his work with The Philly POPS, David conducts concerts, opera, and theatre performances around the world. He has performed with such distinguished artists as Dame Judi Dench, Dame Emma Thompson, Heather Headley, Idina Menzel, Petula Clark, Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, and Matthew Morrison. He has conducted many prominent

orchestras, including the London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Atlanta and Cincinnati Symphonies, and Boston Pops.

David is widely known to TV audiences for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary *Les Misérables* concerts, both of which have become PBS fund-raising perennials. In the UK, he has performed many times on television, most notably as conductor of the immensely successful Sondheim 80th birthday Prom and as the conductor for four years of the Olivier Awards, the UK's equivalent to the Tony Awards. Recently, he made his Zurich Opera debut with *Sweeney Todd*, starring Sir Bryn Terfel.

David currently lives in London.









guest artist

## MANDY GONZALEZ

---

Called by Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the musical sensation *Hamilton*, “one of the greatest singers on earth,” Mandy Gonzalez has thrilled audiences on Broadway, lit up the screen on television, and started a social movement.

Mandy currently stars as Angelica Schuyler in *Hamilton* and on the CBS hit, *Madam Secretary*. Onstage, the dynamic range of Mandy’s voice sets a new standard — one moment, she can be soft and sultry; the next moment, she can shake the rafters. Mandy is a Warner Music artist and recently released her debut album, *FEARLESS*, which debuted at #13 on the iTunes pop charts.

Mandy is also known for originating the role of Nina Rosario in the Tony Award-winning show, *In the Heights*. Previously, she also starred as Elphaba in the Broadway production of *Wicked* — blowing the roof off of New York’s Gershwin Theatre every night.

Mandy is the proud founder of #FearlessSquad — a social media movement for inclusiveness and belonging. The movement connects millions of people around the world, encourages them to be their best selves, and helps them empower each other.

Mandy is also an author — she recently published a widely-cited article in the *Harvard Business Review* on how to overcome one’s fear of public speaking and be more confident in communication and leadership.

Mandy previously appeared with The Philly POPS for 2017’s July 4 *Party on The Parkway*, where her version of “This Land is Your Land” shook the crowd. She also celebrated the Holidays with The POPS in last years Christmas Concert Series.



# THE PHILLY POPS ROSTER

## 1ST VIOLIN

Luigi Mazzocchi  
Guillaume Combet  
Blake Espy  
Paul Reiser  
Kate Suk  
Greg Teperman

## 2ND VIOLIN

Michelle Bishop  
Tamae Lee  
Carlos Rubio  
Diane Barnett

## VIOLA

Davis Barnett  
Scott Wagner  
Sarah Sutton

## CELLO

Uli Boeckheler  
George Atanasiu  
Brooke Beazley

## OBOE & ENGLISH HORN

Geoffrey Deemer

## FRENCH HORN

John David Smith  
Todd Williams

## WOODWINDS

Sean Bailey – Alto Sax 1, Piccolo, Flute  
Kaj Hansen – Alto Sax 2, Clarinet, Flute  
Joe Smith – Tenor Sax 1, Clarinet  
Greg Riley – Tenor Sax 2, Clarinet, Bassoon  
Mark Allen – Baritone Sax, Bass Clarinet, Clarinet

## TRUMPET

Matt Gallagher  
Dan Wright  
George Rabbai  
Bob Gravener

## TROMBONES

Paul Arbogast  
Brian Pastor  
Dave Cianci

## TUBA

Brian Brown

## TYMPANI & PERCUSSION

Dave Nelson  
William Kerrigan

## RHYTHM SECTION

Dan Monaghan – Drum Set  
Jeff Smith – Piano  
Steve Beskrone – Bass

## HARP

Andre Tarantiles





guest artist

## CHARLIE ALBRIGHT

Hailed as “among the most gifted musicians of his generation” with a “dazzling natural keyboard affinity” who “made quite an impression” by the *Washington Post*, American pianist/composer/improviser **Charlie Albright** has been praised for his “jaw-dropping technique and virtuosity meshed with a distinctive musicality” by *The New York Times*, and his “extravagance that had showmanship but never felt cheap” with his “ease and smoothness that refuses to airbrush the music, but animates it from within” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and Gilmore Young Artist Award, Albright won the Ruhr Klavier Festival Young Artist Award presented by Marc-André Hamelin (Germany) and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In addition to performing, Albright is sought after as a speaker, masterclass instructor, teacher, and competition judge. His debut commercial recording, *Vivace*, has sold thousands of copies worldwide and the first of a 3-part *Schubert Series* of live, all-Schubert recordings was released in 2017. Charlie Albright breaks the “classical” rules of music by connecting with audiences like no other. Through his music, speaking, and unique improvisations that bring music to life, he crosses all genres...and makes it fun.

Albright regularly appears at major concert halls, festivals, and

with artists of all genres worldwide. In 2019, he was the guest artist at the Isaac Stern Auditorium main stage of Carnegie Hall with the American Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Leon Botstein, and made his return appearances at the 2019 Bergen International Festival in Norway, where he performed a sold-out solo recital and was given the honor of performing the festival's traditional yearly concert of the Grieg Piano Concerto at Grieg Concert Hall with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra.

Albright regularly collaborates with artists from all genres, including vocalist/conductor Bobby McFerrin and violinist Joshua Bell. He has collaborated five times with revered cellist Yo-Yo Ma: at the honorary degree ceremony at Harvard University for Senator Ted Kennedy; at a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary remembrance of 9/11; at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* with Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison; at the Aspen Institute's *Citizen Artistry* conference in New York; and with the Silk Road Project.

Albright's compositions and improvisations have been likened to “the great Romantic-era composer-pianists” by *Classical Source* and have been praised as “thrilling” by the *DC Metro Theatre Arts*. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* raved that he “brought the art of classical-music improvisation to a new level.”





trumpet

## TERELL STAFFORD

Terell Stafford, acclaimed trumpet player based in New York, has been hailed as “one of the great players of our time, a fabulous trumpet player” by piano legend McCoy Tyner. Stafford is recognized as an incredibly gifted and versatile player, he combines a deep love of melody with his own brand of spirited and adventurous lyricism. Stafford’s exceptionally expressive and well defined musical talent allows him to dance in and around the rich trumpet tradition of his predecessors while making his own inroads.

Since the mid-1990s, Stafford has performed with groups such as Benny Golson’s Sextet, McCoy Tyner’s Sextet, Kenny Barron Quintet, Frank Wess Quintet, Jimmy Heath Quintet and Big Band, Jon Faddis Jazz Orchestra, Carnegie Hall Jazz Band and Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Alumni Band. Stafford with the Hamilton Clayton Jazz Orchestra, performed on Diana Krall’s Grammy-nominated *From this Moment On* (2006). John Clayton invited Stafford to perform with the Clayton Brothers Quintet and Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra. Stafford is a member of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and they were awarded a Grammy in 2009 for Best Large Ensemble, *Live at the Village Vanguard*.

Stafford can be heard on over 130 albums. His latest recording *This Side of Strayhorn* has been hailed as “the first must have album of 2011” and “genius.” Stafford is the Director of Jazz Studies and Chair of Instrumental Studies at Temple University, founder and band leader of the Terell Stafford Quintet, and Managing and Artistic Director of the Jazz Orchestra of Philadelphia (JOP). Stafford is renowned in the jazz world as an educator, performer and leader and has received countless award nominations and accolades.

Stafford was born in Miami and raised in Chicago, Illinois and Silver Spring, Maryland. He received a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Maryland in 1988 and a Masters of Music from Rutgers University in 1993.

# THE PHILLY POPS FESTIVAL CHORUS

---

The Philly POPS Festival Chorus is a 170-voice ensemble that performs with The Philly POPS under the direction of Jeff Kern, Head of the Vocal Division for University of the Arts.

The Philly POPS Festival Chorus began performing in 2002 and performs with the POPS orchestra during the annual Christmas concert series and Broadway series. The chorus has performed with many professional artists including Faith Prince, Capathia Jenkins, Ashley Brown, Lisa Howard, Lauren Kennedy, Rachel York, Alice Ripley, Ann Hampton Callaway, and The von Trapp Family Children. The Festival Chorus is an auditioned, volunteer organization composed of singers ranging from high school students to retired professionals. Auditions are held in mid-September and in mid-January.

## JEFFREY KERN

Chorus Master Jeffrey Kern joined the faculty of the University of the Arts in 1991, where he currently holds the rank of Associate Professor. His responsibilities include applied voice, conducting, advanced piano classes, advanced sight reading, vocal pedagogy for teachers, musicianship, jazz ear training, styles and diction for vocalists, and classes for the Musical Theater Minor. He conducts the University Chorus, Handbell Ensemble, and various small vocal ensembles, and was the former Head of the Vocal Division. He has also acted as music director in the theater department's productions of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Cabaret*, *A Chorus Line*, *Rodgers and Hart Revue*, *On the Town*, and *Weird Romance*. In 1998, he received the Louise Beitzel Award for excellence in teaching.







Geoff Albert-Bolinski - T  
 Mark Anderson - T  
 Jim Bailey - T  
 Linda Baldwin - A  
 Michelle Balentine - S  
 Morgan Barlow - B  
 Dave Berkowitz - B  
 Cori Bortnem - S  
 Connie Bosna - A  
 Kellie Bowker - A  
 Briana Broberg - A  
 Tracy Brobyn - A  
 Fabiene Brown - S  
 Beth Burkhart - S  
 Suzanne Calise - S  
 Heather Caporaso - S  
 Chrystina Cappello - A  
 Barbara Carfolite - A  
 Sophia Cavalli - A  
 Doug Clayton - T  
 Robert Coble - B  
 Amy Copeland - S  
 Mark Cordova - B  
 Becky Crunk - S  
 Hunter Daigle - T  
 Buddy Deal - T  
 Kate DeFlaviis - A  
 Katherine Dilks - A  
 Lauren Dranoff - A  
 Josh Eisenberg - B  
 Lindsay Evans - A  
 Benita Farmer - S  
 Lisa Ferretti - A  
 Marcia Foor - A  
 Joe Fort - B  
 Nancy Fort - A  
 Faith Foyil - S  
 Nancy Gager - S  
 Patti Garver - S  
 Kelly Germann - S  
 Susan Gormley - A  
 Jennifer Gottschalk - A

Jaye Green - S  
 Tom Green - T  
 Amber Gay - A  
 Kathy Guy - S  
 Alexandra Haas - S  
 Brooke Hanson - S  
 Peggy Hayward - A  
 Don Henry - B  
 Marian Henry - A  
 Mark Henry - B  
 Rachel Henry - S  
 Tom Henzel - T  
 Lori Howard - S  
 Charlotte Humes - A  
 Jack Ingram - B  
 Katherine Innamorati - A  
 Stephen Jackson - T  
 Elisabeth Jaouad - A  
 Nancy Kadwill - A  
 Helena Kan - S  
 Helen Karol - S  
 Maureen Keeney - A  
 Jim Kelsh - B  
 Heather Kriesman - A  
 Joan Labosh - S  
 Michael Labosh - T  
 Jeanne Leisner - A  
 Amy Leonard - S  
 Jayne Lester - S  
 Amy Lewis - S  
 Jieling Lin - A  
 Joanne Lipa - S  
 Shurong Liu - T  
 Mary (Nicole) Lynch - S  
 Nicole Manning - S  
 Peg Manochi - S  
 Kathy Margolis -  
 Jeffrey Masino - B  
 Liz Mataset - A  
 Michael McCausland - T  
 Eileen McCue - A  
 Jennifer McGowan - A

Patrick McGranahan - B  
 Julie McCormick - A  
 Gail Middleton - S  
 Meagan Moody - A  
 Kathleen Moran - S  
 Chris Mudge - S  
 Ken Muhleisen - T  
 Rebecca Muller - A  
 Michael Nahill - T  
 Ted Newell - T  
 Emily Norton - A  
 Kim Nurick - S  
 Mark Olsen - B  
 Todd Omohundro - T  
 Amelia Osterhoudt - A  
 Lew Osterhoudt - B  
 James Palmer - B  
 Betty Pannell - S  
 Ellen Paparone - S  
 Laurie Pellicore - A  
 Mark Pietuszka - T  
 Maggie Place - S  
 Dawn Price - A  
 Michael Pugh - T  
 Alison Quairoli - A  
 Jennifer Rackow - A  
 Marilyn Radley - S  
 Laura Raffaele -  
 Denise Randazzo - A  
 Jamie Ray-Leonetti - A  
 Brian Reid - T  
 Desiree Riccardelli - A  
 Betsy Rich - A  
 Dave Riegel - B  
 Denise Rose - S  
 Jane Rose - A  
 Allison Rossi - S  
 Michael Rugnetta - T  
 Evan Samlin - T  
 David Satterfield - B  
 Mary Anne Saveoz - A  
 Peter Scarpato - B

Barbara Schwartz - A  
 Maura Schwartz - A  
 Angelina Sciolla - A  
 Chuck Scott - T  
 Jim Sellers - B  
 Sridhar Shenoy - B  
 Frann Shore - A  
 Sally Siegfried - A  
 Hong Sima - T  
 Laurel Smail - S  
 Elaine Souliard - S  
 Tina Stanfa - S  
 Allison Stevens - A  
 Jonathan Storace - B  
 Heather Stott - S  
 Nancy Stott-Trauger  
 Kate Strubinger - A  
 Nancy Sullivan - A  
 Emily Szal - S  
 Hsi Tai - S  
 Wei Ping Tai - T  
 Laura Teal - S  
 Arienne Thaw-Bolton - A  
 Monique Timberlake-Brady - S  
 Jane Tonkin - S  
 Jon Treadwill - B  
 Alison Tufano  
 Laura Velarides - A  
 Barbara Venella - A  
 Nicole Volpa - S  
 Colin Vroome - B  
 Carol Walton - A  
 Bertina Whytehead - S  
 Wenjie Wilson  
 Katie Winner - A  
 Amanda Winter - S  
 Noah Woodard - T  
 Claire Wunderlich - S  
 Jenny Yang - S  
 Connie Yetke - S  
 Eric Yu - T  
 Melina Zhang - S

# PHILADELPHIA BOYS CHOIR & CHORALE



Renowned for its commanding musicianship, intelligence and interpretive abilities, the Emmy-winning and Grammy-nominated Philadelphia Boys Choir has cultivated a devoted following worldwide for its highly acclaimed concerts and performances.

Established in 1968, achievements include world tours, recordings with internationally renowned artists such as Luciano Pavarotti, television appearances (*Saturday Night Live*, *Good Morning America*, etc.), and praise from critics and audiences worldwide.



## JEFFREY R. SMITH, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

An alumnus of the Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale, Smith stepped into the position of Artistic Director in 2004 and has since led the choir on concert tours throughout North America, South America, Europe and Asia. Under his direction, the choir has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Pennsylvania Ballet, Philly POPS, Opera Philadelphia and Curtis Institute. Venues have included the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, and Carnegie Hall in New York City. Among the political dignitaries in the audience were prime ministers and presidents, including Barack Obama.

Smith is a 1999 summa cum laude graduate of Ithaca College with a Bachelor of Music in Composition. His original compositions and vocal/instrumental arrangements have been performed by various ensembles throughout the country, including the Toledo Symphony, York Theatre (NYC), Ocean City Pops and Philly POPS. As a pianist in much demand, Smith has played with the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Philly POPS, and for several shows on and Off-Broadway. He is also assistant conductor for the Philly POPS.





## SOPRANO

Samir Abbas  
Gabriel J. Beckett  
Nathaniel Brathwaite  
Luke Brooks  
Elliet Brown  
Christopher A. Bruette  
Jeston Cai  
Carmelo Carino  
Arnab Chaudhuri  
Sarthak Chaudhuri  
Jadon Davidar  
Lucas Garcia Drass  
Max Ebenreiter  
Paxton Ellis  
Leo Felix Denburg Gade  
Quentin W Gannone  
Peter C. Gomez  
Henry Thomas Gralish  
Josiah A. Harris  
Cavan Hurley  
Josiah E. Johnakin  
Asa S. Johnson  
Peter Kim  
Bu Long  
Shawn Ashton Luna  
Isaac Mendenhall  
Augustine D. Miller  
Darien A. Nelson  
Liam A. Newkirk  
Jonah Owens  
Quinn Pollard  
Jack Pustizzi  
Alexander Ramirez  
Christopher Sempier  
Jonah Serotta  
David Sigmund  
Alexander Sterious  
Daniel Mark Strong  
Mark Swetland  
Asher Walker  
Yiguo Zhang

## ALTO

Jeremy G. T. Allen  
Peyton Barger  
Hayden Basch  
Archibald Bednarek  
Tyree Carr, III  
Aleem Gaetano Castillo-Gambardella  
Linus Chen-Plotkin  
Lucas Collazo  
Levi Craig  
Ayodele Ekundare  
Olukayode Ekundare  
Teagan Ellis  
William E. Filanowski  
Leonardo Garcia  
Kolby Ryan Grim  
Mark Houck Jr.  
Arthur Hu  
Kael Käufer  
Edward Lankin  
Chase Long  
Liam MacLeod  
Griffin J. Miller  
Malachi Lafayette Nisbett  
Timothy O'Connor  
Benjamin Wellington  
Adonijah Roberts  
JD Scarpa  
William Sterious  
Matthew Stewart  
Carlos David Villegas

## TENOR/ CAMBIATA

Jeff Adams  
Cameron Bowden  
Samir James Buch  
Rowan Cahill  
Jason Cho  
Patrick Corcoran  
Scott Crothamel  
Oliver Jackson  
Ernest Jennett  
Ethan Kang  
Justin Malec  
Pierre Samuel  
Judd Serotta  
Peter Slattery  
Robert Smith  
Andrew Walton  
Daniel R. West  
Michael J. West  
Ronald Woods Jr.  
Dan Woods  
Ronald L. Woods  
Joshua Xavier  
Owen Yoder

## BARITONE & BASS

Jason Michael Adams  
Aedan Barlok  
Bill Bloom  
Andrew John Blum  
Paul Campbell  
Robert L. Carpenter, III  
Devin Casas  
Harry Dozor  
Jack Ebenreiter  
Benjamin Charles Ransom Favino  
Luke Ganley  
Gerardo Garcia  
Jordan Hodess  
Elijah Q. Huertas-Klingele  
Jude A. Hutchinson  
Owen Krewson  
Kenneth Lankin  
Stephen R. Leonard  
Michael Lowry  
Sandy MacLeod  
Paul Mainardi  
Maximilian Missler  
Brian Mordi  
Sridhar Shenoy  
L. Bruce Smith  
John Stroud Jr  
Connor Texada  
Michael P. Walton  
Charles Witmer



# ST. THOMAS GOSPEL CHOIR

---

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Gospel Choir (STGC) is from the Historic African Episcopal Church of Philadelphia, where the Reverend Canon Martini Shaw is the Rector. The STGC currently consists of 60 spirit-filled, energetic, singers, ministers, and musicians of all ages and backgrounds. The choir's membership represents more than 10 different area churches.

The STGC shares their music ministry at over 100 services, programs, concerts, and celebrations of all kinds every year. In 2013, STGC was named "The Best Regional Choir" in Verizon's Music Competition, How Sweet The Sound, and the choir performed to a sold-out audience at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. In 2015, the STGC won "Traditional CD of the Year" and Walt Blocker won "Producer of the Year" at the The Rhythm of Gospel Music Awards held in Memphis. Locally and nationally, the STGC has received numerous awards and recognition, including the PHL LIVE Center Stage competition for "Best in Gospel Music" for which the choir was recognized by the Philadelphia City Council.

STGC has more than five musical recordings that showcases their various styles and love of all music from original service mass music to soul-stirring gospel music. The most recent is Part 1 of their first Holiday Music EP now available.

The STGC regularly performs several genres of music including gospel, classical, Motown, pop favorites, and classics such as Stevie Wonder, U2, Gladys Knight, and Elton John, and will join the POPS in 2020 for its tribute to Aretha Franklin. STGC has appeared in the Lee Daniels movie soundtrack of The Woodsman and the English version of the international cartoon Kikoriki, as well as several plays and other musicals.

The St. Thomas Gospel Choir has performed in San Jose and Limon in Costa Rica and completed an 11-day tour in Rome, Venice, and Florence, Italy in June 2018. The STGC will be singing for the Inauguration Ceremony for the Mayor and City Council this January at The Met Philadelphia and also will be the featured Artist at the May Festival in Cincinnati in 2020 with the Cincinnati Orchestra.



# WALTIER BLOCKER

is the co-minister of music with his Creative and Performing Arts classmate, Dr. Jay Fluellen, at the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia. Walt attended both Westminster Choir College and the University of the Arts and studied church music, opera, and music education. Walt is a classically-trained singer and is a well-known bass soloist, music director, recording producer, song writer, vocal coach, actor, and often writes music with The Philly POPS, for the Washington National Cathedral, national music conventions, and churches and choirs around the country. Waltier also serves on the national board as a consultant for musical changes and addendums for the Episcopal Church. Walt has performed and worked with directors, singers, and musical artists all over the U.S. and Europe. Walt is known for demanding excellence. His passion for music, combined with years of varied experience and knowledge and most of all love of God, brings out the best in everyone with whom he works.



## MUSICIANS/DIRECTOR/MINISTERS

Walt Blocker,  
*Co Minister of Music, Director of Gospel Choir*

Dr. Jay Fluellen,  
*Co Minister of Music*

Waymond Elliott,  
*Co Minister of Music*

Steven Page,  
*Organ Player*

Wayne Browne Jr.,  
*Percussion*

Oke Nwaneshiudu,  
*Piano Player*

*The Reverend Canon* Father Martini Shaw

### SOPRANO

- Asiha Braxton-Garvin
- Angelica Moss
- Diamond Rhodan
- Janelle Cheeseborough
- Jenelle Wilson-Johnson
- Lenoria DeVine
- Lynne Galloway
- Shonse Hawkins
- Susan Patricia Ben
- Victoria Braxton

### ALTO

- Deneka Anderson
- Gladyce DuBrey
- Jackie Sampson
- Patricia Akins
- Shaleen Manning
- Shannon Kemmer
- Terry Corson

### TENOR

- Craig Whitley
- Dale Williams
- Daryn Stewart
- Dwayne Betters
- John Cheeseborough
- Julien Sandjong
- Justin Trotman



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-21

**Joseph Del Raso,**  
*Chairman*

**Tony Mahon,**  
*Secretary*

**James M. Matour,**  
*Treasurer*

**Wilbert D. Abele**

**Timothy Alles**

**Joan Carter**

**Pamela Cyr**

**Jim Dever**

**Daniel DiLella**

**Rollo A. Dilworth**

**Robert Donio**

**Carol A. Eggert**

**Frank Giordano**

**Lisa Hale**

**Adriana Herrera**

**Dr. Ali A. Houshmand**

**Dermid Kelly**

**Marc A. Lucca, P.E.**

**Harry D. Madonna**

**Barry Magarick**

**John J. Meko, Jr.**

**Steven K. Mignogna**

**Denise Viola Monahan**

**Gregory Montanaro**

**Ryan Peters**

**Dino Petrongolo**

**Philip Rinaldi**

**Jon C. Sirlin**

**Bill Tullio**

**Ashley E. Widger**

**Salvatore M. DeBunda, Esq.,**  
*Chairman Emeritus*

**Samuel Savitz,**  
*Chairman Emeritus*

# ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF ENCORE SERIES, INC.

**Frank Giordano,** *President & Chief Executive Officer*

**David Charles Abell,** *Music Director*

**Terell Stafford,** *Artistic Director for Jazz*

**Karen Corbin,** *Chief Operating Officer*

**Daniel Palmieri,** *Vice President of Sales, Marketing, and  
Customer Relations*

**Keith Obaza,** *Production Director*

**Joshua Thomas,** *Director of Development*

**Austin Berner,** *Manager of Communications*

**Kelly McMurtry,** *Contributed Revenue Associate  
& Events Manager*

**Jessica Cook,** *Staff Accountant*

**Will Farr,** *Graphic Designer*

**Brendan McHale,** *Program & Production Associate*

**John Meko,** *Special Projects for Executive Co-op*

**Jeffrey Kern,** *Chorus Master*

**Vincent Leonard,** *Music Librarian*

**Jeffrey Smith,** *Assistant Conductor*

## Marketing

**Mark Gisi,** *Partner, Brand Strategist, Eastern Standard*

## General Counsel

**David H. Marion, Esq.**

## POPS Physician

**Dr. Gary W. Dorshimer, MD, FACP, FCPP**

## POPS Photographer

**Peter Blaikie,** *Bachrach Photography*

